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The 2 sections of the document are concerned with the problem of teaching migrant children and a possible approach to doing the job more effectively. The first section is devoted to describing the life and deplorable living conditions of Puerto Rican and Negro migrant workers. The experiences encountered by the children in such an environment are discussed as influences on academic achievements. The problems of the migrant workers, ranging from language handicaps to nutritional deficiencies to automobile ownership, are described. The second section includes a brief treatment of the multifaceted background of migrant children. Emphasis is placed on the positive factors which a teacher can employ effectively in order to increase learning. Activities and objectives are suggested with several basic teaching concepts. Several illustrations are included. (CM)

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TEACHING MIGRANT CHILDREN
The Problem and an Approach

by
Carlos Ponce
and
Lafayette Powell

Editorial Assistance - H. M. Ryan

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Carlos J. Ponce

Mr. Carlos J. Ponce, born Carlos Juan Ponce Muniz, in 1936, was one of fourteen children. His father was a Puerto Rican tinsmith.

After graduating from high school, Carlos worked for a time in Puerto Rico for twenty dollars a week before deciding that his future was in the United States. Living with relatives in New York City, he held a variety of jobs while mastering English and then took employment with the Department of Labor in Puerto Rico as a clerk typist.

In this capacity he was shortly assigned to one of the department's field offices in Hamburg, Pa. where his interest in the migrant worker began. He rather quickly became involved with community organization work and was soon placed in charge of the field office.

After transfer and a brief time in a similar position in Glasboro, N.J., he was placed in charge of the Regional Office in Camden, with responsibility for the regional employment program.

Although his responsibilities had by this time grown tremendously, his salary had not begun to keep pace so Mr. Ponce returned to Pennsylvania and took employment first as a foreman and later as bookkeeper in the mushroom industry. His interest in the welfare of the migrant workers could not long be denied, however, and he soon became involved with the Y.M.C.A. in Reading, Pa., as a part time employer in the Detached Worker Program. For the past three years he has been thus employed but on a full time basis and spending ninety per cent of his time working with migrants.

Mr. Ponce, the father of four daughters, is a member of the Spanish Speaking Council of Reading and Berks County, a member of the Human Relations Board of Reading and Berks County, and president of The Spanish Baseball League of the county. He is also on the executive staff of the Reading Y.M.C.A.

Besides these activities he also finds time for his two hobbies, reading and fishing, and for furthering his education. He has taken course work at Albright College, The Pennsylvania State University, and the Kutztown State College and hopes eventually to become a teacher--"preferably close to the farming areas where I can maintain my contacts with the migrants."

* * * * * * * * * * * * * *

Dr. Lafayette Powell, a native of Philadelphia, is one of three children born to the wife of a negro Civil Service employee who was originally from Richmond, Virginia. The father died when Lafayette, the oldest child, was only seven years old.

With the encouragement of a hard working mother whose theory of child rearing was based on independence and challenge, young Powell graduated from Philadelphia's famous Central High School in 1932. By working first as a demolition laborer and later as a substitute teacher, he was able to complete a B.S. in Education at Temple University in 1938. His undergraduate major was in Special Education.

Powell's M.Ed. degree was paid for by work as a news reporter and again as a substitute teacher, and in 1941 he finally landed a full time teaching position in one of Philadelphia's disciplinary schools. His stay there was brief--not because of any trouble but because he was promoted to the position of junior high guidance counsellor. He had scored fourth out of five thousand who had taken the examination prior to that time.

In 1964, Powell was granted the degree of D.Ed. in Psychology by Temple University having completed his clinical experience in two years rather than the usual four or five. From that time until recently he has served as a School Psychologist in Philadelphia and is currently on leave, serving as Psychologist in Charge of Psychological Services for the "Get Set" project of the Anti-Poverty Program.

He is married, the father of a teen-age boy, and an ardent hobbyist in the areas of photography and "Ham" radio. In his new found interest in the education of the very young he feels he's found the ultimate focus of his career.

M.R.

STEP INTO MY PARLOR

M.R.

MAYBE TODAY

SUBCULTURE OF THE MIGRANT WORKER

Carlos J. Ponce

The Puerto Rican migrant worker, indeed any of the migrant workers that annually help to harvest America's crops, is a forgotten person. The term "forgotten" is used advisedly because this is the man that is seldom thought of or spoken of except on those occasions when he hits the front pages of our newspapers for doing something that our society considers a crime. Even then we are likely only to think or perhaps ask "What makes these people behave the way they do?" "Why do they have to live under such deplorable conditions?" Why do they accept life as it is today without thinking of the future?" If we truly desire answers to some of these questions, we must first understand the plight of the migrants; and to do that we will have to look deeply into their family background, their present environment, their education, their motives, and their aspirations.

Puerto Rico, one hundred miles in length, has a maximum width of only thirty-six miles yet contains a population of over two million persons. Unemployment is high throughout the year. Some regular jobs are available but usually only for those that are fortunate enough to have completed high school, and most such jobs are available only in the big cities. Great numbers of these people, however, live in the mountains; and as they are the ones least likely to have finished high school, it is right here where the problems begin. The country people, for the most part, have an education that terminated somewhere between the fifth and the eighth grade. The children are sent to school; but as soon as they reach a working age, they have to drop out and go to work with "Papa" so as to provide an extra income for the whole family which typically includes a minimum of six children.

The sugar planations will provide work for three or four months, and perhaps one extra month of work will be available in the tobacco field, but the wages are far below those paid for farm work here in the United States. In order for a family to make ends meet, the head of the family often has no other choice but to come to the United States during the summer to help in the harvesting of the different crops. For these "crop-followers," April is the asparagus season in New Jersey, closely followed by the blueberry and strawberry seasons. Then comes the financially disillusioning "dead period" from early June to July. The migrant worker cannot stay idle during this time because he has continuing debts to pay back home so he will try his best to move from one farm to another in order to find more work. Even though he speaks no English, he quickly becomes aware that there are other farms within the same area. Therefore, he avails himself of the services of another migrant worker who knows the area very well and who will take him to a place where he can continue working. This person, who has been "in the States" for a number of years will very probably begin exploiting the newcomer immediately.

For example, the older hand possibly already knows of a farm that may be no more than ten miles away where work is available; but in order to charge the novice a high fee for guidance and transportation, he will drive him around until the trip seems to have taken an eternity. He then charges fifteen or twenty dollars for a trip that would cost no more than five dollars if it has been made by bus or cab. Thus, disillusionment is increased and bitterness and mistrust begin.

Before I go any further, I would like to introduce you to Pedro. He is a migrant worker himself who arrived via the same route as the others but who learned his way around quite rapidly. He knows the area inside out. He also has good contacts with growers who will pay him ten dollars or more for every new laborer he can bring to the farm. He owns a brand new car and chances are good that he is also in some racket such as selling "numbers." If you look into the trunk of his car you will find cheap jewelry, shirts, suits, and a variety of trinkets likely to appeal to the farm worker. He knows his way to and from any airport in the area where he operates. He also knows where to take the workers to have a "good time," and he charges high fees for his services. Very seldom will you see him during the week, but on Fridays and Saturdays he seems to be everywhere selling anything from moonshine to shoelaces and charging fifty per cent above what the articles would sell for in their own market. By the way, he speaks very good English. Such operators do a double disservice by making the workers suspicious of any truly well-intentioned countryman who later tries to help them.

Now let us return to the calendar of the "crop-followers." July is the exodus month in New Jersey for this is the month when the peach thinning and apple thinning begin in almost every other state on the Eastern seaboard. When our debt-ridden worker finds himself with a decreasing work potential, he will try to move as quickly as possible to another area where he can hope to put in fifty or sixty hours of work during the week. Thus, he packs his few belongings and moves to Pennsylvania, Maryland, West Virginia, or upstate New York, where he will work perhaps three weeks during July, and then possibly return briefly to his New Jersey point of departure.

He remembers, though, having seen acres and acres of tomatoes somewhere in New Jersey or in the Southern part of Pennsylvania, and he has learned that August is the month to begin harvesting the tomatoes. Picking tomatoes by piece work can yield over a hundred dollars a week, and this is good money for these workers so it's "off and away" after the tomato crop.

When September comes you'll see our worker again packing and getting ready to leave for another farm where he can be employed during the latter part of September and through October and the first week of November--this time picking peachers and apples.

Now comes the "big white bear" which is the term used by the Spanish speaking migrant worker for winter. At this time he can choose among three alternatives. He can return to "The Island," go south to Florida, or try the mushroom industry in Eastern Pennsylvania. He has heard of California and how good the pay is out there, but it seems very far away from his native land and flying home from California, should some emergency arise, would be much more costly than flying from either Florida or Pennsylvania.

As there is a six million dollar mushroom industry employing between four hundred and five hundred workers (mostly Puerto Ricans) in this immediate area, let us assume that our worker needs money badly enough to continue working and that mushroom picking is what he chooses. His choice will allow us to see exploitation at its worst.

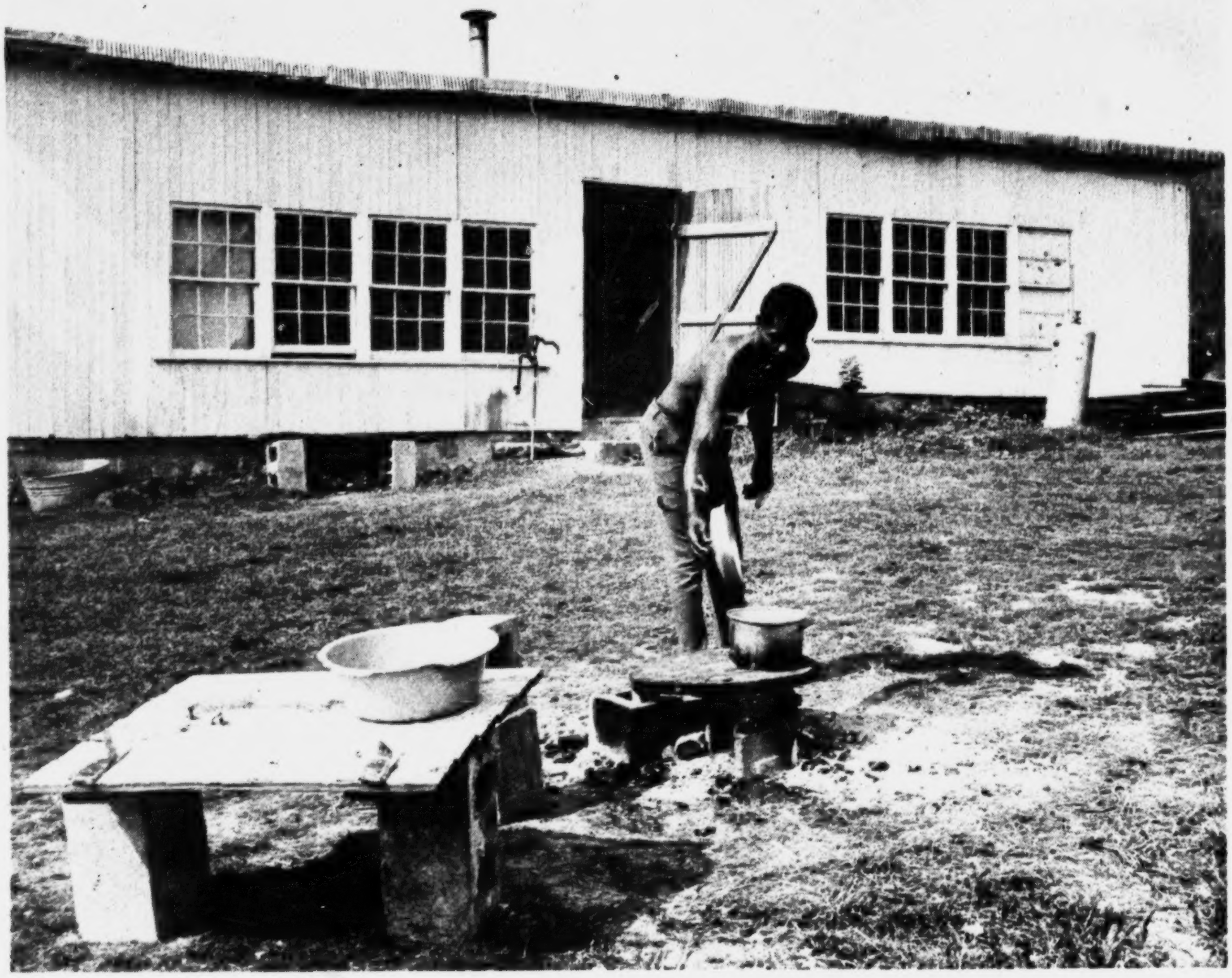
The mushroom is seasonal. There are two crops annually--the first beginning in October, reaching its peak in November and lasting until December. The second crop will not come in before late January, but this one will usually last until late May or early June. Between the two seasons is the inevitable "dead period" during which the owners plant again and the pickers don't make much money.

One can never exactly tell when the mushrooms are going to come up; but once they do, the working hours are long. On some days the pickers start as early as one o'clock in the morning and work until ten o'clock at night. It sounds outrageous, but it is the truth. Generally they work seven days a week and average twelve to fifteen hours a day at a rate of from $1.15 an hour and up. But even if the worker is an old hand with four or five years on the farm, it is unlikely that he will be earning more than a $1.40 or $1.50, because the grower "can't afford to pay any more." The same grower, however, can pay one of his own people a $1.75 and upward, even if the worker is inexperienced. It is hard to convince the workers that this six million dollar a year industry cannot afford to pay better wages and provide better conditons for them especially when they see the grower in his Cadillac followed by Junior in his foreign sports car.

Let's spend a day with one of these workers. He gets up at three o'clock in the morning, goes into the kitchen and prepares a cup of coffee to fortify himself against the early morning cold as he walks to the plant. When he gets into the plant he will punch a time card that will show the time to be nor later than 3:30 a.m. There are plenty of mushrooms to be picked and he works without stopping until 9:00 a.m. when he takes a short break. This break usually means another cup of coffee, and only that, because there is not enough time to go to the barracks and prepare a good breakfast.

After this short recess, he resumes work until twelve o'clock. He then goes outdoors or to the barracks if it is not too far away, opens a can of soup, heats it, and quickly gulps it down because the grower will allow him only half an hour for lunch.

After lunch, he works until six or seven o'clock in the evening at which time he may have one hour for supper, but he must rush to prepare it himself and then return to pick

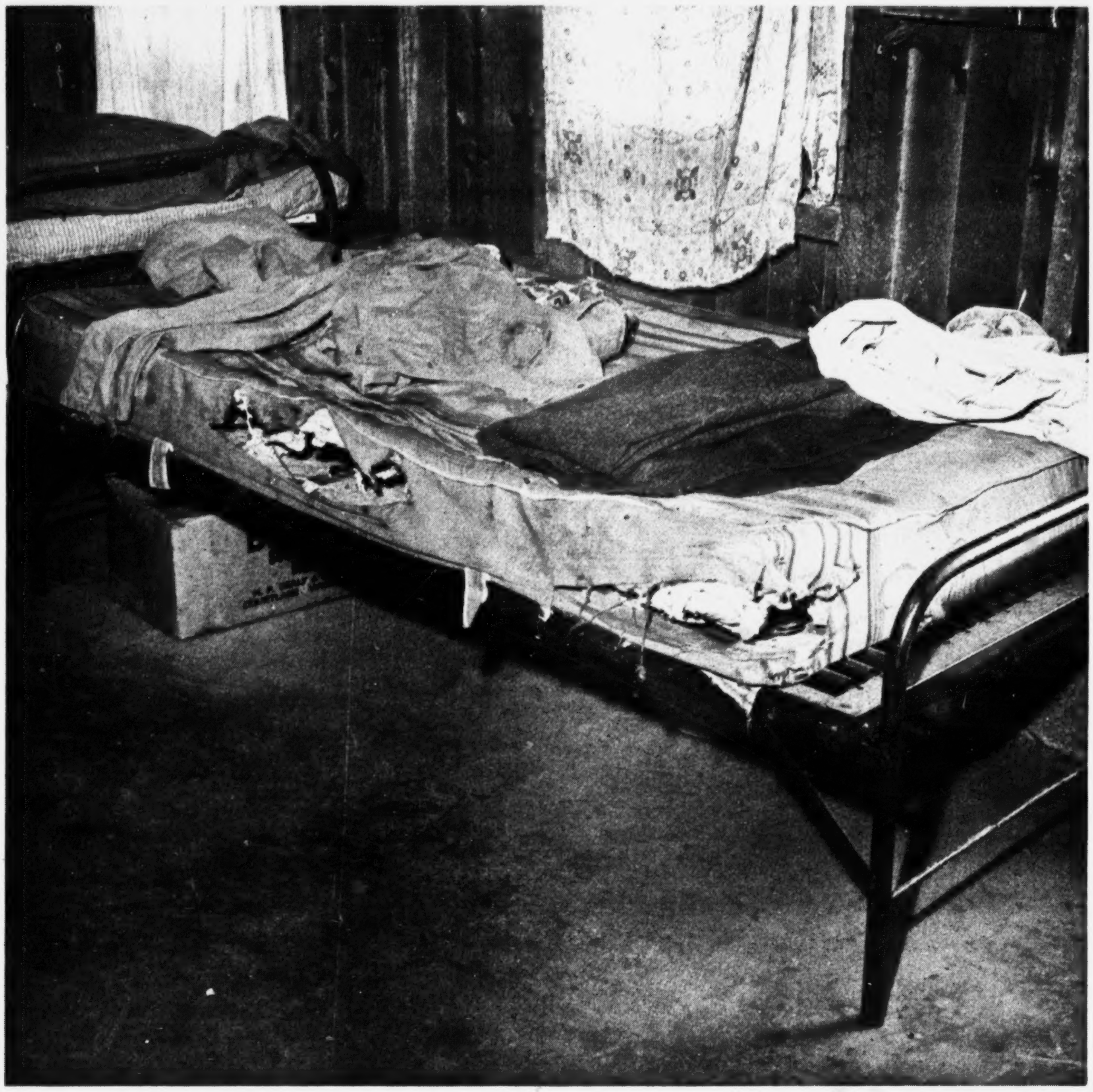


M.R.

COOKOUT

mushrooms until perhaps ten o'clock at night. By the time that worker finishes one such day's work he doesn't feel like cleaning, doing the dishes, or even taking a good bath but instead goes directly to bed, dirty clothes and all, and rises early to continue the same routine the following day. In the meantime, the dishes, the stove, the floor, and even the bed remain dirty. How could one expect this man to keep his quarters neat when he doesn't even have time to take a shower?

Occasionally, one of these men becomes ill. If it is during the busy season there is seldom time to take him to the doctor or to a hospital today--perhaps tomorrow. Always tomorrow! If the worker continues to complain of sickness and does not report for work, he will



M.R.

ROOM WITH A VIEW

very probably be fired even though he has not been drawing pay for the time he has been ill. The grower, you see, needs a steady worker and a bed for him to sleep in--and the mushroom can't wait until "tomorrow!"

Field workers generally have healthier and less unpleasant working conditions than the mushroom workers, but the hours are still long and the work is still tiresome. When picking asparagus for instance one has to be in a cramped position most of the time. The workers sit, kneel, and even lie prone trying to find momentary comfort while doing the picking. The same holds true for the tomato and bean pickers. There may be a new federal law that calls for a minimum wage for farm work, but somehow most growers seem to find ways to pay less. This is relatively easy when workers are under piece rates.

There is a routine that is followed six and even seven days a week. If the field is far away, the migrant worker gets up early in the morning to get there and works from seven o'clock until noon. There is no coffee break because when one is doing pice work, he gets paid according to what he picks, regardless of the hours spent. This is where the minimum wage law for farm workers is abused. If the worker does not pick enough asparagus to make the established rate, the grower will not pay the difference between the piece work earnings and the legal hourly wage of $1.15.

The Puerto Rican migrant worker who works under a contract does not have to worry about not picking enough on a piece work basis because the grower is required to keep a record of the production of each one of his workers. If by the end of the week the worker has not earned what the hourly rate calls for, then the grower must pay the difference. The walk-in (non-contract) worker does not have this advantage. Most mushroom pickers are in this latter classification.

The lunch period may possibly be an hour long, but the lunch usually consists of only a pint of milk and two slices of bread with some luncheon meat or cheese. The Spanish speaking worker's name for this type of sandwich is "camiseta" which, literally translated as T-shirt, refers to the whiteness and the dryness, by noontime, of the bread used.

Work will continue in the heat of the afternoon without any break until five or six o'clock when the workers return to their camps for their evening meal. It will be a simple one, probably consisting of beans, rice, and a piece of fried meat.

Where the farm is large and employs great numbers of workers and one or two families, there may be a verbal contract made between the workers and one of the families. The wife will buy food and will cook for all of them. She will perhaps charge $15.00 a week per person for three meals a day. The meals under such an arrangement will usually be much better and will consist of rice and beans, fried chicken or pork chops, and sometimes a vegetable salad.

I have given you a fair description of how the Spanish speaking migrant works. Now, I would like to describe for you the living conditions which this migrant endures during his short stays at the different farms.

M.R.

ALL CONVENIENCES

INSIDE AND OUT

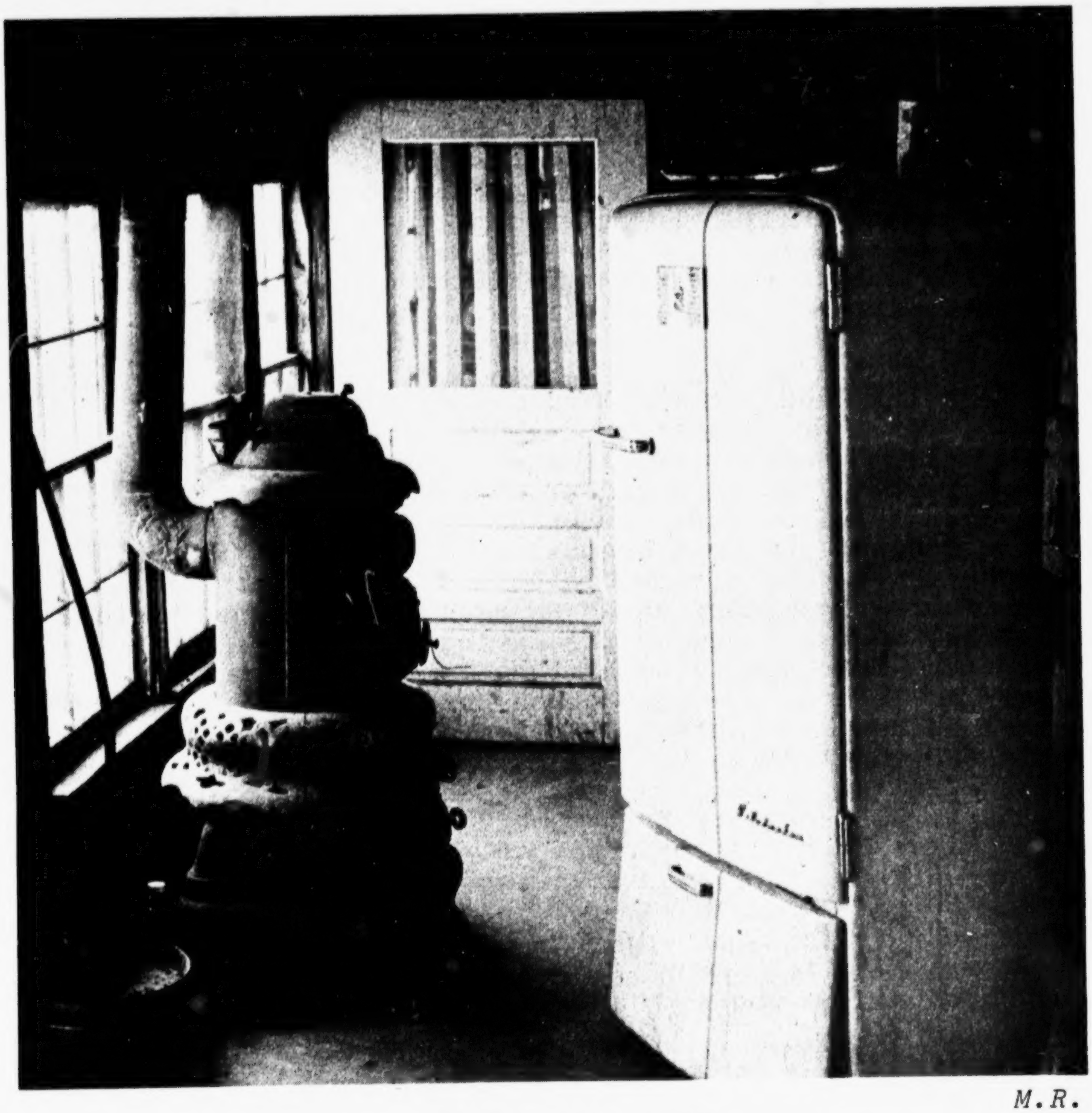
M.R.

Housing is and has been one of the biggest problems that migrants face. One might think that they are content with the lot, but that is far from the truth. They don't like it at all, but they put up with it because they don't expect to remain on the farm for the rest of their lives. They accept their living conditions simply as another temporary obstacle that they have to overcome in order to support their families in Puerto Rico. Oh, yes, they do complain to the grower, but the grower is deaf and doesn't do much to repair the living quarters for his migrants. After all, if they leave, others will come. It's that simple.

Lest the reader think I am drumming up undeserved sympathy for a group that has always lived inadequately, let me tell you of a visit I made recently to the Puerto Rican home of a mushroom picker currently working in this vicinity. Even I was surprised to find that this man owns one of the most beautiful homes in his part of the country. He has his own television set, a record player, a refrigerator, an AM-FM radio, a washing machine, and of all things a rug on the living room floor. Why, the reader might ask, does he then come to the mainland to work if he has it so good back home. Well, the reason is that he has been able to provide all of this for his family only by working both in Puerto Rico, cutting sugar cane and in the states, harvesting the various crops we have here. He knows how to save his money and much prefers to live decently although, as was said above, he puts up with the substandard living conditions that exist on many of our farms solely for the good of his family. He left the Island with one thought in mind--to work hard and save a specific amount of money that will carry him through until the sugar cane season starts again in Puerto Rico.

Let us see how conditions here contrast with what many if not most of these workers left behind. As one enters a migrant camp, he will most likely enter through the kitchen. Here is found either an electric or a gas range. Most of the time the burners are in very poor condition and perhaps only one will have enough holes open to be used for cooking. Grease and dirt have accumulated through the years and have caused the cooking range to stop working. The grower very seldom finds time to come into the sleeping quarters to check on the living conditions so he can pretend to think that everything is fine at the camp. If the worker complains, the grower may well reply that the burner must have been in good condition last year because he heard no complaints from the previous group that had lived there.

Next to the heating stove one sees the refrigerator or what is left of it. It is second hand as is everything



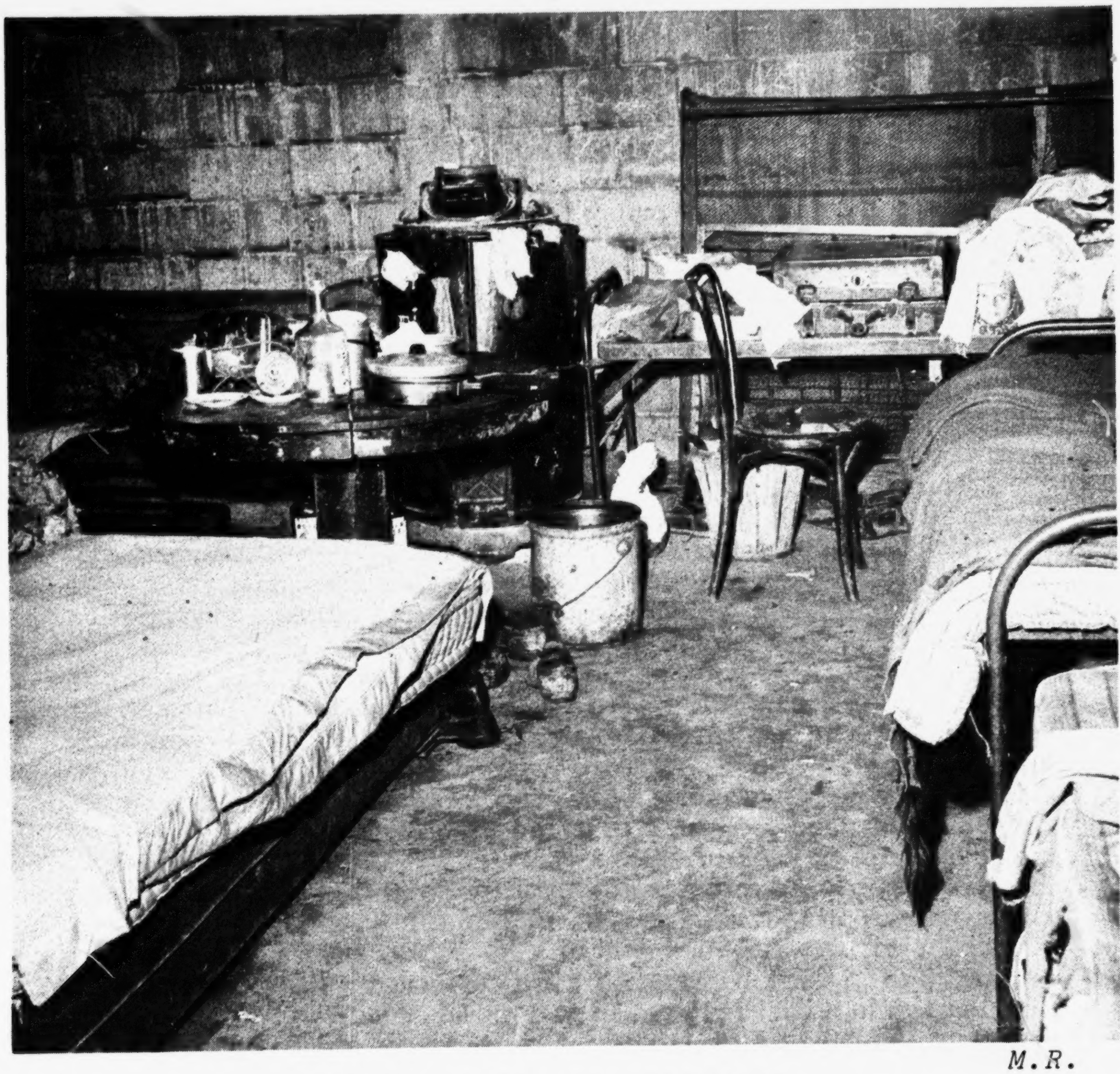
M.R.

SECOND HAND LIFE

else one finds in the farm barracks. The workers will pay for the groceries on an equal share, and they may have a person that will do the cooking during the week, but the meat that they buy will not last for the whole week. Most of it will rot and have to be thrown away. The refrigerator, you see, stopped working sometime in the indefinite past because it was not defrosted; and this year's workers can only hope that the grower will soon have it repaired.

Cooking utensils are the same ones that were left behind from previous years. By the time the new worker comes into the camp, these utensils are chipped, rusted, and grimy so the current worker group must ask the grower for replacements. It becomes extremely painful to the grower to be asked every year for new things--"If only they would take better care of all the things I give them to make their lives more comfortable!"

Now, let us stop at the dining room. What dining room? Such is an undreamed of luxury for the migrant worker. Instead, the grower has supplied a table and some chairs to make the kitchen look like a combination of both. When supper is ready, the workers will take their plates and some will sit down at the table; but others must sit at the entrance to the kitchen or even on their beds. Some of them, understandably, take their food and sit under a tree to eat.



M.R.

SUITABLE FOR LIGHT HOUSEKEEPING

Next we enter the sleeping quarters which are in the same building. Have you ever seen the beds in a migrant camp? Perhaps you have; but when you took that field trip to see a labor camp, you may have been taken to the best camp in your area. For every good camp one sees though, there are at least three camps that are far from decent. If the farm is a big farm, the number of workers will also be great. In these, the workers will sleep in bunk beds set up in rows on both sides of the room. The formula is simple--the more beds packed in, the more workers accommodated!

Mattresses are old, and clean bed sheets are provided only at the very beginning of the season. Blankets are available only when the grower judges the weather to be getting cold enough.

It should also be mentioned that the labor camp is usually an old building with dilapidated inside walls and a ceiling that is falling down. The floor, even if cemented, has cracks throughout; and a rough wooden floor is much more common. Dirt accumulates under the beds until it seems that all one would need to grow plants indoors is some irrigation. The surroundings are so very filthy simply because the worker has no time to clean around the camp and the owner feels no obligation. Whatever volunteer cleaning is done costs the worker dearly in valuable time and energy as the grower is not likely to pay for what he considers to be solely the workers' responsibility.

Thus far in referring to migrant workers and their way of life in a farm labor camp, our attention has been directed at the single man in the camp. The reader at this point might well ask, "What about family life on these farms?" Well, the family man is most welcome on the farm especially if he has a big family and if living facilities are available. This hiring of families creates an abuse that is characteristic of the larger farms. A family man becomes a slave of the grower because the grower knows that by supplying the house he is going to keep that family for the whole season or perhaps for two or three years. The man can be required to work all over the plant, as can the wife and some of the older children. One clever trick used by the grower is to have the children work from twenty to thirty hours a week by dividing the hours between the husband and wife. In this way he can easily avoid getting caught violating whatever child labor laws exist. This is done quite regularly. The older children come from school and have to go right into the mushroom plant to pick mushrooms for long,

long hours. Many times children have stopped going to school entirely simply because the father has become so frightened of the grower that he doesn't dare to ask him for a little time to take the children back and forth to school.

What happens to these families when the season is over? Well, the grower then doesn't have enough work for even the husband and doesn't show much interest in the problems of the families that he, himself, encouraged the father to send for. Frequently, the only solution to the problems of the off-season is the Department of Public Assistance. The stranded worker is referred to Public Assistance for welfare money and to the State Health Nurse for medical care, but then during any dispute with the worker, the grower will bring up the subject of "you people coming to this country to live on welfare."

Such, however, is far from the truth because the Puerto Rican migrant worker hates charity. As long as he can use his arms and hands, he will not beg anybody for help. If there is no off-season work near the farm where his family lives, he will usually try to get into a "day haul" crew so that he can work on a distant farm yet return to his family each evening. When he accepts charity, it is truly a last resort.

For the most part, though, the Puerto Rican migrant worker leaves his wife and children on the Island.When they are brought along it is with the grower's promise of a more or less permanent home, and they usually become quite stable.

For an insight into how the Negro migrant worker fares, let us look at the Smith family. As they have a home in the South to which they return between seasons, their residence will usually be less permanent; but their treatment and exploitation will not differ greatly from that experienced by most other migrant families. They left Mississippi early in the season and headed north. The Smiths, however, seldom travel on their own. They are recruited and transported by a Crew Leader for whom a more appropriate name would be "Crook Leader" for his is one who takes advantage of his own people. The family with their few belongings boards a bus for a trip of three or four days to a specific farm in a northern state. The Crew Leader has already made an arrangement with the grower to have a given number of workers at his farm on a specific date. When they arrive the Crew Leader sees to it that the families are distributed among the camp buildings, large or small, according to family size. The Smith family moves into their new home, and the head of the family assigns the beds to each member. Storage space is almost non-existent so it is indeed wise that belongings brought along were limited to pots and pans and a few extra blankets or bed sheets.

During their stay the oldest child will take care of the rest of the children while Mom and Dad work in the field. Instructions are daily given to the eldest, and it is his responsibility to carry them through. While the parents are out in the field, the children remain within the confines of the barracks playing with an old doll or a truck that was brought along. An observer, noting the way these children behave, might well think that they are mentally retarded. Sometimes the oldest child stands for long periods with his head bowed (perhaps hoping that his parents will soon return), or he might look for hours toward the horizon thinking what seem to be deep thoughts, or perhaps simply looking away in an attempt to escape from some vague something. Sooner or later, though, he will have to return to the realities of caring for the little ones.

When it is time for lunch, the oldest one has to prepare the food and feed all his brothers and sisters. Their lunch usually consists solely of canned goods. Pork and beans is the favorite, perhaps because it is rather cheap. Meat is a luxury in most of the camps, and it is eaten only once or twice a week--usually around payday--when the workers can most nearly afford to buy some.

Payday is a happy time in some way for all. To the worker it means a bottle of wine, meat, a pair of shoes for one of the children, and gambling. For the Crew Leader it means much more. It means business; and if the week was a good week, he is in for a big catch.

The Crew Leader will go into town to buy cheap wine and one or two bottles of whiskey, stamps, cigarettes, etc., and will then resell everything at a higher price. A shot of whiskey will cost anywhere from fifty cents to seventy-five cents. Stamps will be sold at ten cents, and the cigarettes at fifty cents a pack plus two cents extra for a pack of matches. Two or three cases of beer will be bought for resale at thirty cents a can and later at fifty cents when the workers become groggy, and the supply grows short.

Still later this man will produce a pair of dice or a deck of cards and the gambling begins, and the Crew Leader that has been known to lose in a crap games or a card game is indeed a rarity. As has been seen, he usually waits until the workers have had at least two or three beers before starting the games, but this is only part of his exploitation. Mr. Smith, who is constantly reminded of how much he could do if he should win a lot of money, is encouraged to go "all out" until he may almost literally loose his shirt.

The Crew Leader, who gets a commission from the grower for every basket picked by his crew, also collects more money from the workers according to what they picked in payment for his original services. This character, who combines these fees with the manipulation described above, can easily make a thousand dollars or more a month. In the meantime the Smith children will have to wait another week for that pair of shoes that was promised even before they left their home in Mississippi.

Furthermore, when the father loses all his money, he comes in raving mad and cursing everything in sight. Through scenes such as these the children learn much!

M.R.

MY LEARNING CLOTHES

Bedtime becomes another learning situation for children thus reared. When the parents are going to have sexual intercourse, they take the child that regularly sleeps with them and puts him with the others. The older children, who are usually the last to go to sleep, know right away what's going on. Anyone having the opportunity of talking to them can attest to the fact that by the time these children reach eleven years old they have become mentally mature in the art of sex.

For the young Negro migrant, the Crew Leader supplies prostitutes. Prices, according to the Crew Leader, are cheap. He charges ten dollars to the worker, gives five or six dollars to the prostitute, and keeps the rest. The act sometimes takes place in his station wagon but more likely out in the field where the Crew Leader keeps an old mattress just for that purpose.

Recreational activities especially worthwhile activities, are very scarce in migrant camps. Recently, however, there has been a noticeable improvement, at least in this vicinity, through the efforts of the Y.M.C.A.'s Detached Worker Program. The program staff, by the wise use of Office of Economic Opportunity funds, has been organizing classes, sponsoring athletic events, providing movies, and taking the workers on excursions to cultural events and historical sites. Though still small, the program shows great promise.

All too frequently, however, games of cards or dominoes may still be the only recreation that a clean living man will be able to enjoy during his stay at a given farm. Television? Sometimes! But who wants to watch a program on a T.V. set that is not working properly. Also, under present conditions the migrant worker is usually so tired during the week that the only thing he thinks of is his bed.

On weekends there is no shortage of recreation, but very little of it can be called "worthwhile." There are for instance many card games played not for fun but for money. Workers from other camps will gather (often with help from Pedro) every weekend on a specific farm where there is known to be a game. The game will be run by a head master or dealer who keeps a certain amount of money for each hand that is dealt. This is his main business, and the money that builds up in the coffee can which is used to collect the "rake-off" will be his second salary for the week.

One very popular game is one in which the dealer lays four cards on the table and the players bet varying amounts of money on one or more of the cards. After all bets are placed, the dealer begins turning up cards until one of the cards already on the table is matched. When such a match occurs, the dealer pays an amount equal to the bet to anyone whose money is on that card but he also collects all the money bet on the other card in that row. The game then goes into its second stage with the remaining two cards but no new bets can be placed. While the game may continue from early in the evening until late at night or even the next day, the odds are in favor of the dealer; and the worker who gambles usually loses all his money plus, perhaps, some that he has borrowed.

Why do they play these games or buy Pedro's numbers? The young, of course, will gamble for fun; but for the family man it's purely and simply the hope that some week lightning will strike and he can leave the farm forever.

Drinking, too, is an ever present problem. Not only is it a problem in itself but it is the prime cause of many violent incidents on the farms. After the drinking comes noise, and the many workers that do not drink and who want their sleep do not like it and make themselves heard. The consequences are arguments, fights, and sometimes even killings.

Prostitution and venereal diseases I consider as the third major problem which migrants face in their search for weekend fun. A prostitute may come into the camp anytime but usually on Friday and about dusk. During one evening she will entertain as many workers as possible. After all that is her business--selling herself to them. She charges $7.00 per person and she may lie with as many as fifteen or twenty workers on any given night. Such a person could hardly be classed as a "high class" prostitute and the result is that venereal diseases among migrant workers are rather common, with gonorrhea leading the list.

As evidence that such activities are not only morally and hygenically wrong but also often financially diastrous, consider the case of Jose whom I met recently.

Jose is a migrant worker from Puerto Rico. He has been coming to the States for the last four years and returning at the end of each season to his wife and three children. While he was staying at the farm, a young prostitute was brought in for the workers. Jose decided to give it a try, which he did after, of course, paying his seven dollars. Three days later I received a call at my office from Jose. He was whispering because he did not want the rest of his co-workers to hear what he had to say to me. When I kept my promise to visit him that afternoon, he got in my car and asked me to drive away from the farm. On the way out he told me that he had noticed some sharp pains while he was urinating. My first question was had he had any sex during the last week and his answer was "yes." He did not want me to take him to the State Health Department because they would ask him too many questions, so I took him to a Medical Center where a doctor treated him. It took three visits and four injections of penicillin to have him cured. Do you know how much money he spent altogether? Well, he did not work for four days thereby losing at least $48.00, and the three visits to the doctor cost him $22.00. All of this plus the seven dollars he paid the prostitute amounted to $77.00 or approximately a week's pay. Similar cases are very common throughout labor camps.

Sometimes it seems that the recreation these workers enjoy most is purely and simply violating the law in any way they can. It's possibly caused by resentment brought on by the exploitation they continually face, but many of the younger ones do carry knives, steal at every opportunity, drink before they reach the legal age, and frequently drive unlicensed vehicles.

When a migrant carries a knife he feels that he is doing so only for his own protection. He has been turned down so many times in restaurants, barber shops, and stores, even in the town that profits from his working nearby, that he has acquired something of a persecution complex and feels that everybody hates him simply for what he is. When one is hated, one feels need of defense so he buys a knife or possibly a gun--a good one--and he will use it in any threatening situation outside the farm. He does not intend to use it against his own people unless there is a real threat to his life although indeed he may later do so and for a rather trivial reason, if drunk. That knife or gun is to be used against us because we are the ones he blames for making life so unhappy. While his reaction is certainly wrong, his evaluation of the cause of all his troubles is generally correct. We are the prime cause of his problem in that while we employ him, we have not learned as yet to accept him as a member of our society. I don't think I should continue detailing what we as a society do to make their lives so unpleasant, but I do know that we are perhaps unwittingly but nonetheless definitely the cause of their problems.

It is easy to buy a car in many of our States. No insurance is required (indeed, frequently not even a driver's license) and one can always find dealers who are more than willing to sell cars to migrant workers. Usually when a car is sold to a migrant worker no guarantee goes with it. The car can break down as soon as it is taken out of the lot and, though the migrant worker may demand return of his money, he knows that his chances of recovery are slim. If he should dare to ask for police help in securing his rights, the likelihood is that he will be arrested for having moved the car without a license. Therefore, he tries his best to keep the car running at least until he can get to the farm. There he and his friends may be able to repair it so that it may run again for two or three weeks. If not, he will have to junk it for perhaps fifteen dollars or simply abandon it. A visit to most any farm should allow one to see how many cars couldn't even make it to the junk yard and were simply left behind.

There are many other situations in which our migrant workers get into difficulty with automobiles. For example, a young migrant usually first learns to drive cars and tractors on a farm. Once he has mastered the skill of driving, his desire for owning a car is great so he begins to save his money toward that end--two or three hundred dollars for a fair car or seventy-five dollars for the car described above that will soon be junked. Let us say that our worker buys one of the better cars, makes all necessary transfers of papers, and happily drives the car around the farm. Soon, however, the desire grows to explore the outside world and, hoping that the police will not stop him, he drives out on the highway. He is tense and nervous. If he sees a police car he becomes frightened and, rather than maintain a steady speed, he will step on the gas and the chase begins. The outcome of the chase can only prove again that "Crime does not pay." Local authorities know of this temptation to drive illegally, and they keep an eye on most farms, arresting violators and making them pay a fine or serve a jail term if the worker cannot come up with the money to pay the fine.

One has to question the wisdom of putting such a person in jail where nothing will be done to improve his attitude and where we have to pay for his upkeep. We are not solving any problems this way. Instead we should have programs to work with the migrants to make them realize the importance of doing things according to law.

While it may seem to the reader that I am explaining away and making light of the many faults of these people, excuses are not my purpose. I am simply describing them as they are--a hard working and simple people, exploited for their industrious nature and often in trouble because of their lack of education. They are more than that though, and anyone hoping to work with them must know that they are also a proud people, a sentimentally religious yet superstitious people and a people torn between a basically trusting nature and an imposed attitude of mistrust.

One should never forget that migrant workers are proud of the work they perform. When one comes into contact with them, however, the Spanish speaking migrants especially, he would be wise not to refer to them as migrants but rather as agricultural workers. You might well point out that I have called them migrants throughout this chapter, but I used the term only because of the reader's familiarity with it. I would urge avoidance of the word at least with the Spanish speaking farm workers because they feel it an insult to be called "migrants."

It is also my conclusion after ten years of experience in working with migrants that no one should ever show pity for them or their children for they resent it. Instead, one should do everything possible to strengthen their feeling of importance of the work they are doing. They know that the vegetables and fruits you eat every day were picked by them, and they enjoy letting you know about it, too.

If a well-dressed person visits a farm with the hope of developing with them some program to make the workers' lives more pleasant, it is more than likely that he will not succeed. They are afraid of such a person not because they fear physical harm but because of mistrust based on the treatment they usually receive from similarly dressed people. In order to reach these people one has to dress casually and if there are children around, he must try by all means to smile and reach the children first before even trying to say "hola" to the head of the family.

As the visitor walks into the house he should greet the family and possibly ask them if it would be possible to have a cup of coffee or a drink of water, for these are available in just about every camp dwelling. Such a request can serve to initiate rapport with the family. After they have been helped in establishing themselves as hosts and the visitor as a guest, they can be approached on matters of business much more easily.

Migrant families and workers naturally mistrust any strangers that come to their doors. If one thinks that simply by bringing in food and clothing on a first visit to a farm he is going to make great progress, he is wrong. He will create, instead, insult and distrust. It is much better to initiate dealings with these basically proud people by asking them for something rather than by bringing things to them. It will quickly be noted that once one makes friends with a migrant family, they will look forward to meeting with him again.

One of the things that one should never do is to promise a migrant worker anything that can't be delivered for he will be looking forward to the time when that promise will be kept. If that time comes and the promise is broken, he will look upon the person having made the promise as something inferior--somebody that can't be trusted. Many growers offer a bonus to their help to be given at the end of a good season. If for some reason the worker has to leave the place because of illness, family trouble, or any other reason over which he has no control, he expects that the grower will keep his promise of the bonus. If it is not paid the worker will never return to that farm and will spread the word to all others he knows that they should not work for that grower.

Despite their many and obvious transgressions, the Puerto Ricans are a strongly religious people who attach great importance to all Holy Days but especially Christmas. Christmas for the migrant worker on a mushroom farm, though, is far from the happy family celebration he would enjoy if he were in Puerto Rico. For him Christmas is just another day, but his thoughts are back in his native land. While some growers will give the worker a bottle of whiskey as a present, there will be no roast pork and not "pasteles" (meat pudding) on this day, only work. Even so, the lonely migrant worker will try to find a way to celebrate. On the weekend before the holiday, perhaps, some of the families that have been living for some time in the area will get together. Each person will put in some money to buy rum or whiskey and a pig. This pig will then be roasted in the same style as it is done in Puerto Rico--over an open fire, not in an oven. The owner will probably lend a garage for the purpose. It might be unsanitary, but this is a part of their culture and somehow the pork would not taste the same if roasted in an oven. Music will be played on the guitar and there will be much singing of country music and improvised songs. Such will be the extent of the migrant worker's Christmas in the mushroom farms.

Holy Week is taboo and workers take extra precautions while working during this week. They are especially afraid of picking mushrooms or cutting any growing thing on Good Friday. They are afraid because they have brought their superstitions along with them and actually believe that if they work on Good Friday they are likely to have an accident, or that anything that is cut will bleed in their hands, but even so, they must work. Consequently they will start around two o'clock in the morning so that they can quit at noon. The rest of the afternoon is to be observed religiously, but they do not go to Church.

This tendency toward superstition is also manifested by the workers' reliance on the sorcerers among them or "Witch Dcotors" as I call them. The camp spiritualist brings his rituals from Puerto Rico where he has been practicing them over a period of years. When he comes into the area, he lets the migrants know of his ability by conducting his rites at his camp. Besides driving out evil spirits and arranging for curses he also tells fortunes, using for this purpose a deck of Spanish cards. He fakes being in a trance and then deals the cards one by one and tells something with each card that he lays on the table. He also prescribes some herbs that will cure various ailments if taken precisely according to his instructions.

What may be a carry-over from these beliefs is an attitude toward medicine in general that seems characteristic of this subculture. If a worker complains of a certain type of pain and some other worker went through the same thing but was treated by a physician, then this other migrant will freely prescribe the medicine and pills that were left from his own visit to the doctor. Either that or he will carry that medicine using it for all purposes until he visits the doctor again for some other reason. He will then throw the old pills away in favor of any new ones he may be given, these again to be used for similar ailments of his friends or for any of his own.

Stangely enough, if one enters the rooms of these spiritualists, he will find the walls decorated with pictures of saints and the image of Jesus Christ prominently displayed on a stand or hanging from the front wall of the room.

The Southern Negroes who come to this region go in for more or less the same thing, but I cannot describe the exact nature of their beliefs because I have not come in contact with any of their spiritualists. I do know, however, by talking to the negro migrants that "Back home, there is one spiritualist that nobody can beat."

I have thus far said very little about the children, not because I want to neglect them, but because I hoped that by giving you a panoramic picture of their parents, you could begin to develop for yourself some idea of what life is really like for the small ones. Toys are a rarity among migrant children. It is hard to find a book in a migrant camp; and if the child does not go to school, it is perhaps because of having no shoes, or because the parents do not know what to do in order to enroll their children. These children have some fun during the summer time; they play "papa" and "mama" or doctors and nurses and they take make-believe trips to other places that they have been before and that for some reason or other they remember well. Through their games they also develop quite a vocabulary of their own. They know what the "Special Dog" means (Greyhound) and regularly employ certain phrases that I cannot mention here.

Despite their depressing surroundings these children are vivacious, full of pep, willing to run errands, ready to learn new words, and willing to listen to outsiders after proper rapport has been established. Often though they are sick, in need of medical and dental attention, too much inclined to "talk back" and ready to tell you what they know about their father and mother and even Sis for that matter.

They live in a world all of their own and very seldom do they get to see what the city looks like.

The new programs for children which are conducted during the summer months, such as Project Head Start, are bringing new hope to them, are clearing up doubts that were existent in their minds for many years, and are helping the migrant children become more independent of their families. I praise Head Start for these reasons, but the teachers could be much more effective if they would take the time to go and visit the parents instead of expecting the parents to come to the classroom. Many of the Head Start teachers don't seem to feel the need to improve family environment and therefore they don't bother to visit the parents where they are. They don't seem to understand that the parents need as much motivation as does the child, and the resulting one-sided approach is causing some misunderstanding and confusion to the child.

Teachers should not show pity for the migrant child but should treat him as any other child in the classroom. He should immediately be given something to do to make him feel part of the class. Teachers should guard against thinking of him or letting the other children think of him as mentally retarded simply because he does not understand language or can't follow instructions well. That child could be the brightest in your classroom, but he will need motivation and much individual attention if he is to see himself as a successful part of the whole rather than as just another headache.

Phonics, it has been said, is outmoded as a teaching device. It has been my experience, however, that one can produce good results with migrant children by the use of phonics. One may well be surprised at how much they learn by using this method. The use of pictures, especially those with bright colors, can also work wonders in terms of motivation.

For a more detailed description of how such methods as these were of particular help to a group of similar children, one would do well to read the book, Teacher, by Sylvia Ashton. While the situation in which Miss Ashton taught is only roughly paralleled in America's schools, she spells out in a most interesting manner a variety of techniques that should be most effective in teaching migrant children.

The migrant child, when ready to go to school, has three basic problems. First, he feels automatically inferior to the rest of the group mainly because of the way he is dressed; and secondly, his vocabulary is limited, and therefore it is hard for him to follow instructions. His third problem is the teacher. She represents authority; she is the symbol of established order which his culture has taught him to resist. If the teacher cannot detect this tendency in the migrant child, both are in for trouble. The teacher's resultant failure to help the migrant child and the child's rejection of the teacher, which is sure to follow, is all that is needed to make life unpleasant for both.

We have different programs to help the migrant worker--but somehow, somewhere, something is lacking. Their education is usually brief, largely because workers stay in a given area for a limited time only and because there is no follow-up on their whereabouts once they leave the area. The Government can spend large sums of money trying to help the migrant worker, but without some form of educational follow-up, the problem will remain the same year after year.

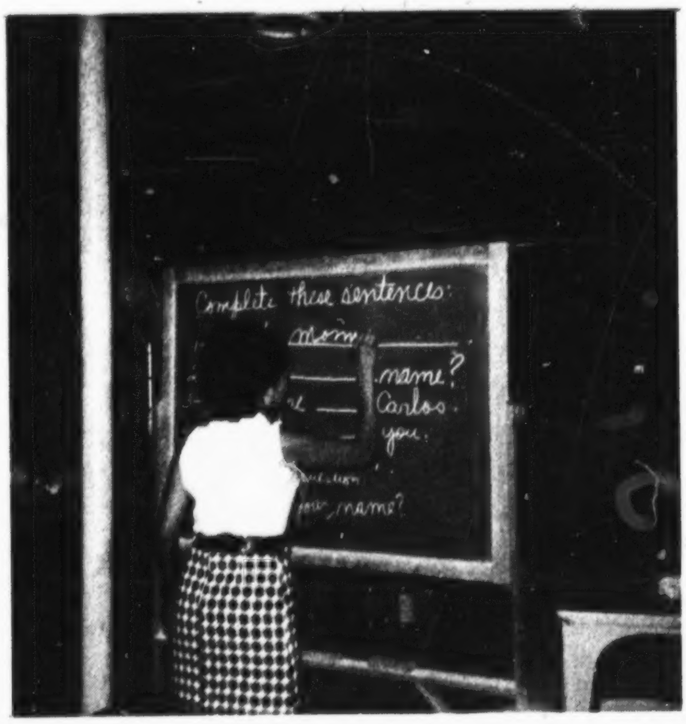
One often hears that migrant workers cannot be helped because they are satisifed with their way of living and I tell you that this is not true. They would like to get away from it all, to have a decent job, to better themselves and above all to better the lot of their children who are their major concern. They would like to have their children attend good schools, get away from farm life entirely, and "become somebody" in the future. And they are not alone in their hopes. Ask a migrant child about his future and what his plans are and he will surprise you perhaps by stating as would your own child that he would like to be an astronaut, a doctor, or a dentist. The girls, of course, will prefer to be teachers or nurses. They begin their schooling with these hopes in mind but hope fades away once they drop out of school and begin farm work. Before long they accept the fact that they, as were their parents, are tied to the farm. The earlier dreams of the parents for the children's eventual success will remain just that--empty dreams--because society didn't care enough to see to it that that child ever really had a chance to "become somebody."

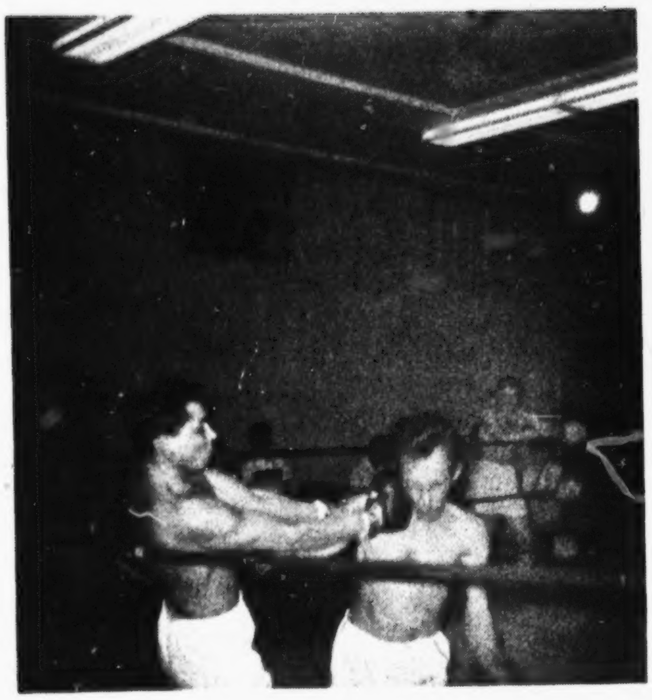
Currently I am helping organize the workers to respond to their own needs and to stand firm against the grower's unfair demands. The organization is called the Action Committee for Mushroom Workers for the Area of Temple, Pa. We are using a Spanish name for it: "Comite Accion de Trabajadores del Area de Temple," and we recognize it by the initials "CATAT." The growers know about this organization and they are afraid of what the results may be. In order to keep us away from their workers they are erecting "No Trespassing" signs all over their farms. But it is too late for that because the majority of the workers are beginning to realize that if things are ever to be better, they themselves, must do something to bring about change.

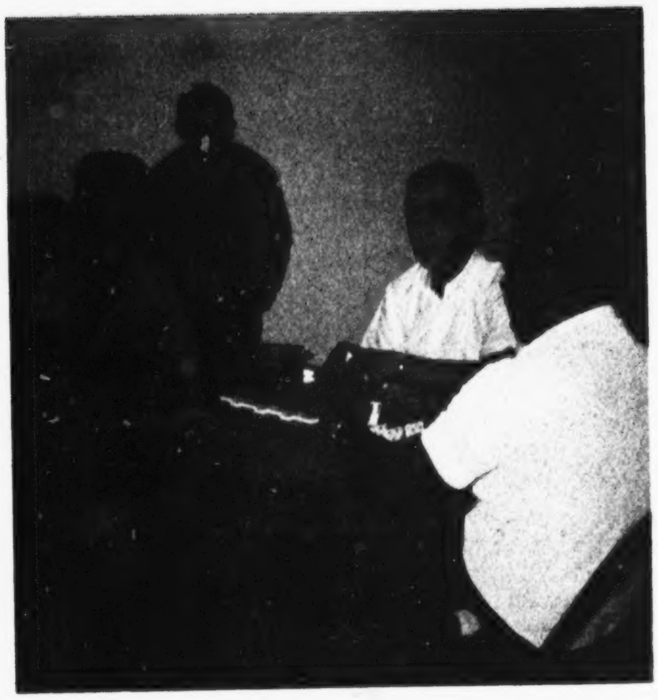
Our vicinity must find ways to give these people a chance to better thmeselves. Instead of merely being willing to criticize them and hoping unrealistically that such criticism will somehow remove the problem, we must begin to care about and do something about their future and, more importantly, the future of their children. They are with us; our society and its needs brought them here; they will not disappear, and it is up to us to make them a part of our communities.

How can this be accomplished? Well, first of all we can't do it by giving them pity, money, or even gifts of clothing and toys for their children. Nor can we help them, at least with the immediacy that's needed, by grandiose community plans to be filed away in some committee chairman's desk for next year. Instead we need an action program of individuals, small neighborhood groups, church groups, and especially teachers to begin something worthwhile now.

At the risk of appearing boastful may I illustrate what I mean by pointing out what I've been able to do in a relatively brief time with one project. Aside from the drive toward organization and the improved recreational program mentioned earlier and which I had a part in initiating, I've had considerable success to date with the classes I've been conducting with the help of O.E.O. funds through the Y.M.C.A.'s Detached Worker Program. In these classes, structured around their need to understand Social Security and the Wages and Hours Laws and their desire to drive, I've been able to teach basic English to over one hundred and fifty workers.

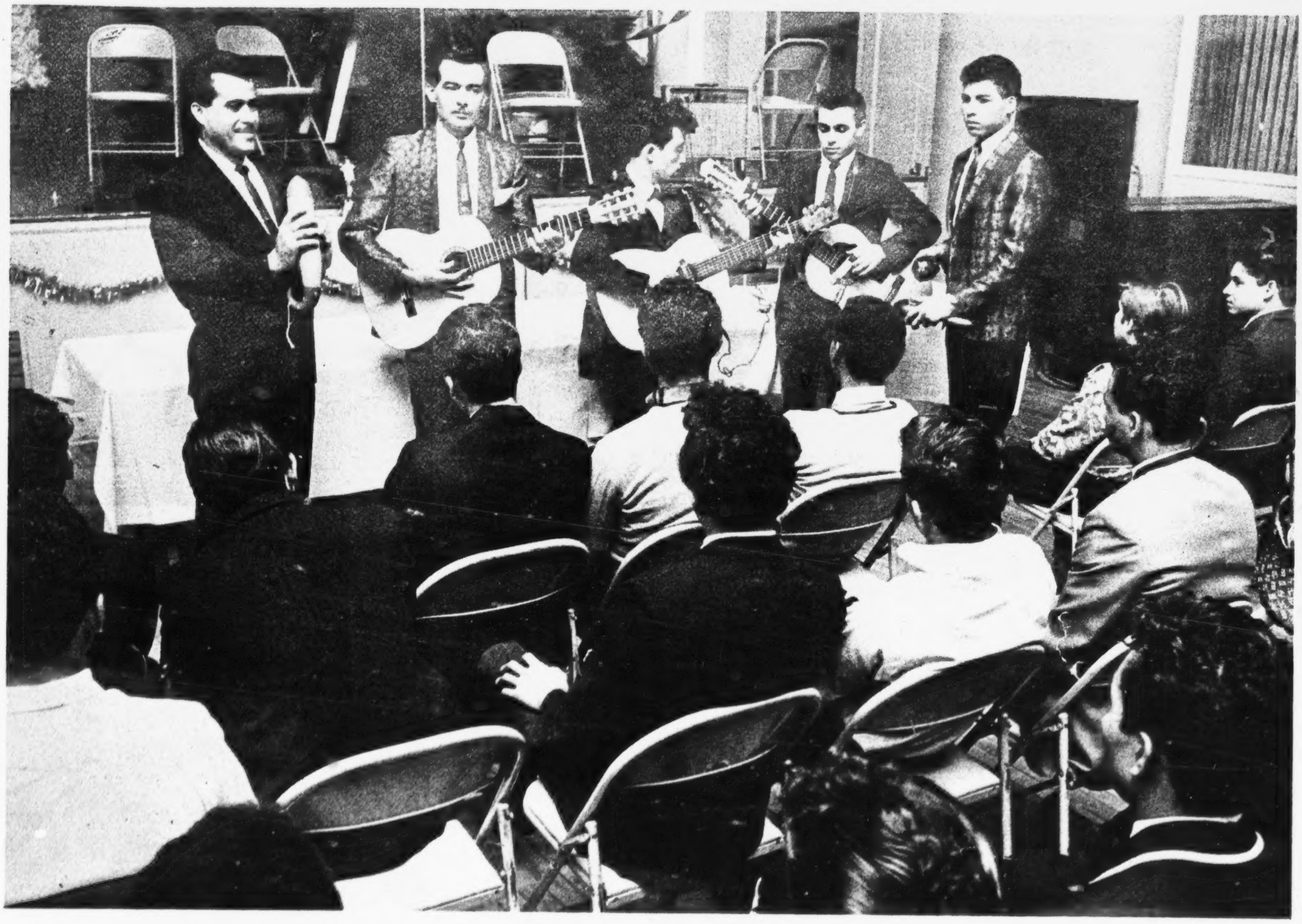




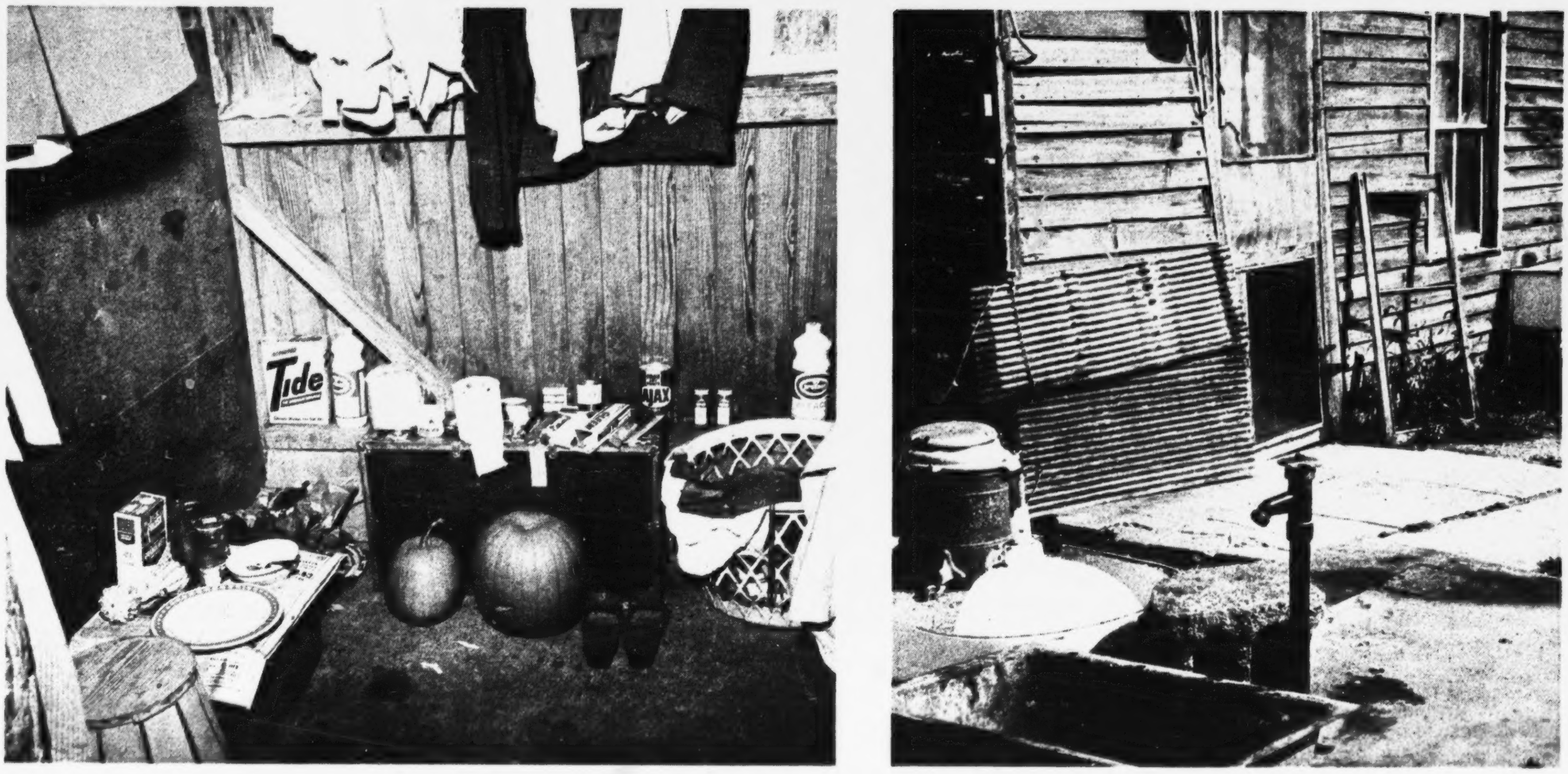


I have been threatened, pushed, spit upon and even forbidden to enter some farms whose owners fear that the workers are becoming "too smart," but I've also had the thrill of giving these people some knowledge of a new found power. Many of them, through their newly acquired ability in English and their skill at driving, have been able to take and hold responsible jobs in industry; and I knew that I've had a part in helping them to realize their great dream of departing the farms forever.

Finally may I point out that if you would like to help, either by community effort or in the classroom, the action will have to start with you. If you expect the migrant to come to you, you will never succeed. You will have to go to them and convince them (not simply tell them) that you see them as something other than "winos," or jailbirds, or general troublemakers and that you really care, he will be happy to go along with you--to go along to the dignity and the standard of living that is the right of all our citizens.



CHRISTMAS AT THE Y.M.C.A.



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BASIC CONCEPTS FOR COGENT TEACHING OF THE MIGRANT CHILD

Lafayette Powell

Most of today's teachers possess a workable knowledge and appreciation of the problems of exceptional children. This is particularly true where the category includes the deaf, the blind, the retarded, or the crippled. Seldom, though, does the teacher recognize the migrant child as one who could be classed as exceptional despite the fact that this child may have as many educational problems as do those with the usual sensory, emotional, or mental handicaps. Indeed it's been only recently that the category of the migrant child has been included in any of the basic textbooks on exceptional children.

Once this concept of the exceptionality of the migrant child is recognized and accepted, however, what is most needed becomes quickly apparent. Primarily a minimal knowledge and a realistic understanding of migrant children will be required. Secondly, will be needed a reasonable and workable plan by which the teacher may adapt her many skills to meet the special educational needs of the migrant child.

With full faith that the required "knowledge and understanding" of the migrants' home life will have been provided by my colleague, Carlos Ponce, the purpose of this treatise is to provide the teacher with a functional insight to the unique educational problems of migrant children and some practical applications of appropriate educational principles--in short, "some things that work."

First, it should be said that since the migrant child and the prototype exceptional child have so much in common, the teacher will do well to recognize and utilize, as did this author, the close relationship between the two, particularly with respect to many established principles for the teaching of exceptional children generally. Secondly, it must be pointed out that a considerable portion of the information that follows is based on gleanings from numerous articles and books dealing with the problems of the migrant, the disadvantaged, and the several types of exceptional children. Thirdly, due credit should be accorded to the teachers who participated in the 1968 Institute for Teachers of the Migrant Child, conducted at Kutztown State College, whose suggestions are also incorporated in this attempt at a concise, coordinated ready reference for the inexperienced teacher of the migrant youngster.

Background Information

To help place the learning problems of the migrant youngster in the proper perspective it is apropos to explore briefly some of the research findings in this area. One of the most significant factors in the background data is the language of the migrant youngster and his associates and the implication it has for teaching.

Studies have indicated that invariably the language employed by the parents and peers of the migrant youngster is quite restricted. Usually, the sentences are short and quite simple in grammatical structure, and many times non-sentences are employed. The sentences are usually in the present, simple past, or future tense with considerable emphasis on the active voice. There is little use of proper subordinate clauses but often a repetitive use of conjunctions such as "so," "because," and "then." The use of adjectives and adverbs is rather limited and often quite rigid. There is frequent use of the personal pronoun. There is also a frequent resort to repetitive statement such as "Y'know," "Y'see," "Y'get it."

No unusual insight is required to see that a youngster who regularly hears such limited and informal language patterns will have many more problems of adjustment to the elaborate language of the school or teacher than does one who comes from an environment where more complex language is employed. The perceptive teacher, of course, will make a definite effort to see that what transpires in the classroom is understandable to the migrant youngster. This may necessitate some paraphrasing or repetition.

The teacher who has done even a little reading in this area will recall that several studies have indicated that the deprived or the socially disadvantaged often are found, experimentally, to have what are characterized as auditory discrimination deficiencies, inferior visual discrimination, and rather poor judgment with respect to such basic concepts as time, number, position, and size. It is interesting to note that these inadequacies cannot be explained on the basis of physical defects of the eyes, ears, and brain. What is apparent as a cause is that the migrant child's environment simply does not demand these kinds of discrimination. So little is said in the home that there is no real need for minor auditory distinction. So drab is the scene that marked visual discrimination is unnecessary. So simple is the environment that little is demanded in the way of complex mental functions. As a result, there is little to motivate such discriminations. Habits of poor attention or no attention become fixed. Value systems (that is, determinations of what is important as contrasted to what is not important) are markedly different from those expected in the school setting. Consequently, it is necessary to teach these children to "listen" to what is going on in the school setting as well as to "see" what is taking place.

Some of the characteristics of the migrant youngster are often quite difficult for the unitiated teacher to understand. With a little empathy, however, the teacher may be able to gain some insight as to the motivation behind the particular behavior causing the misunderstanding. For example, if the migrant child appears to be totally uninterested in books and reading material, this could stem from the fact that at home because of general illiteracy there is very little to stimulate such interest. If there seems to be an unusual interest in physical prowess, this may be no more than a reflection of what is appreciated in the migrant community in the form of being able to work long hours without rest. What may appear to be boisterous or withdrawn behavior may be no more than a normal or healthy reaction to a highly frustrating situation. The marked tendency to want immediate satisfaction of needs and to live in the present and not plan for the future is often related to the fact that for many migrant youngsters the here and now are the things that really count, and the future is unknown, remote, and highly vague.

If the teacher is able to look upon the migrant as another member of the large group of underprivileged she may find a number of aspects noteworthy. For example, she may learn very quickly that the migrant feels highly alienated and certainly not a real part of the general society. She will almost certainly find that the migrant child is not given to self-expression and may feel that a large part of his misfortune is not his responsibility. The migrant child may view his problems as those that are caused by external forces rather than internal forces. Too often he reflects the attitude of his parents which is one of being more interested in "getting by" than in "getting ahead."

The migrant and his children tend to place considerable emphasis on the family and its comfort and enjoyment. For the most part, the migrant and his children are quite casual in their appraoch to life and are often given to seeking opportunity for excitement in order to get away from what must be, obviously a monotonous existence.

Again reflecting what is so characteristic of the migrant group, the migrant child may reveal a tendency to be anti-intellectual. Because he is interested in the practical, education may appear to be that which is abstract and unrealistic. This aspect of his personality, of course, makes for difficulty in positive school adjustment.

As a good part of the migrant culture is related to physical activity, it is not surprising to find that a considerable amount of positive emphasis is placed on that which is done physically rather than mentally. Motivation for the kinesthetic activity, therefore, may be higher than for the intellectual. In this vein runs a strong emphasis on the masculine aspect of work and productive activity. Consequently, some of the anti-intellectualism re-

M.R.

BACK FROM SCHOOL

ferred to previously may be an outcome of the feeling that much that goes on, particularly for boys in a school setting, is sissified or overly feminine. Such things as talking, reading, and general intellectual activity may be considered to be more characteristic of the female. This feeling is understandably reinforced by the fact that a large portion of the teaching force in the public schools is female.

Despite his marked deficiencies in many of the areas considered closely related to school work, the migrant child, as does his counterpart in the larger segment of the deprived or socially disadvantaged population, comes to school with a considerable amount of first-hand information quite well related to real life situations. Often he understands some of the marked realities of our everyday living, and sometimes these reflect the sordid or seamy side of life. He knows about desertions, abandonment, illegitimacy, extra-marital affairs, intoxication, and the like. He also may be quite familiar with the problems involved in getting insurance benefits, compensation, relief, or welfare grants.

This section on background information is intended to provide merely a functional basis for the teacher who has had a limited acquaintance with the migrant child. Obviously, not all of the various facets have been uncovered. It is hoped that the teacher who desires more information will resort to the references given in this pamphlet. It will be noted that some of the background information is alluded to and thus, hopefully, re-emphasized in the following section on basic concepts and "things that work."

Basic Concepts

The mere listing of some applicable basic concepts will do little more than provide a coarse outline of suggestions for the novice teacher of migrants. Even if these concepts are paired with practical procedures there will still remain the necessity for some type of adaptation of the ideas, and in this aspect there is no substitute for good common sense. Some of the concepts are self-explanatory and require no elaboration; others are more subtle and will be explained. It will be noted that some of the ideas mentioned in the background information also appear in this listing. In this second setting, however, there is direct tie-in with the activity suggested so that the teacher may see the relationship.

> Concept 1: The migrant child, like his counterpart in the socially and economically deprived areas can and does possess special skills and knowledge. In a school setting these may not always be considered as assets usually because the skills are those not often employed in the traditional school situation. With a little ingenuity, however, the perceptive and discerning teacher can deploy these skills and knowledges to the benefit of the child and the class.

Suggested Activity

Many of the boys know how to repair simple mechanical devices found in the classroom. The use of a hammer, screwdriver, pliers, and even some wrenches is familiar to many of these lads. No unusual imagination is required of the teacher to see how this experience and skill can be used to help build feelings of belonging, adequacy, and self-esteem on the part of the youngsters. Specifically, a youngster could repair a pencil sharpener, simple pieces of furniture such as a small bookcase or a chair, and the like.

Often the girls are quite familiar with many household activities and even as very young children may have had the responsibility of taking care of younger siblings. Some may even know how to prepare simple meals. A teacher may make good use of this information by having a child explain or demonstrate with or without actual materials how one goes about preparing a specific food or feeding a baby sister or brother. With such activity arises a number of opportunities for one child to feel that she is a real part of what may have been a strange and threatening situation.

Concept 2: The migrant child as the result of his almost nomadic existence has learned to adapt to a wide variety of conditions and situations. Despite this, upon first introduction to a classroom setting he still may suffer real pangs of insecurity and anxiety.

Suggested Activity

The knowledge that this youngster has been in a variety of places and has seen numerous things that other children may not have seen gives the teacher a good opportunity to help the migrant child ameliorate some of his feelings of threat and, again, build his self-image. Specifically, the teacher could ask the child, after some preparation and help given privately, to describe or explain how a given area in which he has spent some time compares with his present environment. Not all activities have to be long or involved; a simple request for verification or approval on the child's part when the teacher is explaining, for example, some geographical area familiar to the migrant youngster will suffice. A query such as the following can be an adequate stimulus: "Is the weather in the __________ section where you have been, John, as hot (or as cold) as it is here?"

Concept 3: The child of the migrant worker, as has already been noted, does not lack culture, or knowledge, or skill; but often many of his "assets" do not take on the same emphasis in the school setting unless some definite effort is made to see that such opportunity arises.

Suggested Activity

Same as preceding.

Concept 4: The migrant child may be more facile in the physical or motor area of activity. In fact, he may feel quite uncomfortable trying to handle a particular situation symbolically.

Suggested Activity

Permit the child to demonstrate or to "show how" a given activity is performed. This may be pantomime or action with a minimum amount of speech. "Show us how the soldier walked." "Show us how you steer a car."

Concept 5: The migrant boy in particular may be impressed far more with physical prowess and endurance than with reading, writing, and discussion. Some of this, of course, stems from the fact that these factors play a paramount role in his group's existence. As a result, he may have a keen interest in a number of sports that depend upon such skills. Prize fighting, baseball, football, and weight lifting are but a few that may whet his "academic" appetite.

Suggested Activity

Be sure to employ activities and materials that will lend themselves to the use of these interests. Physical education presents an excellent opportunity. Stories involving heroes who are boxers or athletes or unusual workers may serve as vivid attractions for these children. Incidentally, girls are also fascinated by such skills.

Concept 6: There are some aspects of school experience which often appear to be basically feminine in the eyes of the migrant male child. Neatness, unusual cleanliness, utter conformity and dependency, and non-aggression are but a few.

Suggested Activity

Lend an air of masculinity by making certain that some of the illustrations placed around the classroom reflect manly

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...SOME OBVIOUS DISORGANIZATION

activities. The sport page of the newspaper and pictures from magazines dealing with sports will provide abundant sources for such materials. Try not to over-emphasize spic and span cleanliness. Give an opportunity, particularly in the physical education program, for a little rough give and take. There should be ample opportunity for the youngsters, both migrant and regular classroom children, to exercise their independence.

Concept 7: The migrant children, like many who are in the lower economic strata have backgrounds that provide a minimum appreciation of order and system. It is not unusual that theirs is a crowded existence with an abundance of disturbance and some obvious disorganization both physical and mental.

Suggested Activity

The teacher should realize the full impact that such backgrounds have particularly upon concepts of time and order as well as the ultimate effect that such an existence will have upon the concept of achievement. It is necessary, of course, to build a feeling of order, time, and achievement. To this end, simple opportunities for success have to be offered repetitively. There should be the minimum amount of adverse criticism for failure to meet time requirements, and effort should be made to impersonalize the necessary time-structured directions.

"Let's see how many of us can have all of our things away by the time the hand reaches the twelve."

"How many of us will be standing in our right places when the bell rings (at recess)?"

Concept 8: The migrant child basically appreciates the value of an education but may not show any real interest in school per se. Some of this stems from the fact that school sometimes appears to be quite artificial and without any real meaning for life in general.

Suggested Activity

Tie in as many of the school activities as possible with real life situations. This is good not only for the migrant but for the other children as well. Make a specific effort to show how the classroom activity does relate to everyday existence. Play stores, model banks, games--all present numerous opportunities for learning most of the fundamental school skills. Many teachers already know how to use these mechanisms. In addition, there should be activities which have a direct relationship to some of the migrant child's daily routine. Computations may be used on such procedures as picking fruit and vegetables and counting the number needed to make certain weights or capacities. Wages, tax deductions, and costs of foods and fuel as well as the amount needed serve as excellent sources for developing computational skills. Discussions surrounding such activities make real-life teaching opportunities.

The above listing is not intended to be exhaustive but merely representative of how certain concepts have "tied-in" or related school activities. With the regular employment of some of these activities school will be made more meaningful for the migrant, and teaching will be more productive.

To provide even more specific suggestions under generalized headings, the following have been culled from literally hundreds submitted by teachers who participated in the earlier mentioned institute for teachers of the migrant child. Again, it should be emphasized that this list is to serve only as a stimulus and an incentive for the teacher to devise other lists of activities that will fit her particular program. The categories are somewhat arbitrary, but the activities can be considered as flexible.

It will be noted that some of the suggested activities are more appropriate for certain age levels.

1. To provide basic experiences:

   a. With such materials as various grades of sandpaper, various cloths and papers, and other materials, have the youngsters note the similarities and differences in textures, color, and weight.

   b. Provide the children with a box containing a multitude of labels from canned goods and have the youngsters match the labels for similarity.

   c. Induce the children to cooperate in bringing in soda pop bottle tops. Have youngsters group those that are similar in various aspects. Counting combined with grouping may also be a very worthwhile activity.

   d. Provide youngsters with a box of assorted bolts and nuts. Have the children group each for size and shape. Have them match the nuts with the proper bolts.

   e. Provide the class with an assorted sample of various nails and brads. Again, have the youngsters sort the items for size, particularly length. Have the children note differences in thickness and shapes.

   f. Provide such materials as various types of plastic so as to observe and compare transparency, opacity, translucency, similarities in colors, and thicknesses.

   g. Using various colored papers and templates, have children cut out and compare and then differentiate shapes and colors.

2. To improve self-image:

   a. Read or tell a familiar story to the class, but change the name or names of the characters to the name of one or more of the children in the classroom. (This is also an excellent device for recapturing waning attention).

   b. A camera for classroom use is a very good device. Photograph the child and display the photograph. Later the photograph may be given to the youngster as a gift. In the absence of a camera or as a variation, self-portraits may be made or individual drawings may be employed in the same fashion.

   c. Designate a monitor assignment by placing the name of the child on a cut-out of the particular implement used in the activity. For example, John's name on the cut-out of the waste paper basket or Mary's name on the cut-out of the watering can may indicate respectively that John is to take care of the waste paper basket while Mary is to water the plants.

   d. Place a name card indicating "host" or "hostess" for the day on a given child who is to handle all visitors to the class for that particular period.

   e. Tape record voices of youngsters and play them back.

   f. Play the game of "Little Jack Horner" but to help the migrant child learn the names of other children at lower grade levels. Use the name of each child in the class instead of Jack.

   g. Have a boy- or girl-of-the-week bulletin board and, using participation with teacher control to assure equal distribution, put the drawing or portrait of the boy or girl of the week on prominent display.

   h. Place in easy access a full-length mirror in which the children may view themselves; make a definite effort to exhibit this device to the fullest by using positive commentary. For example, "Agnes has been very pleasant today and very helpful. Boys and girls, don't you think Agnes should see how she looks on her good day?"

   i. Make every effort to compliment the migrant child, particularly if it is evident that a new garment or hairstyle has been worn. Vary the compliment by making a guessing game as to which child has the new addition.

j. Be sure to provide an opportunity for the migrant youngster to participate in various skits, being careful to see that the assigned role does not make any unusual demands. For example, if the child is too shy to handle a speaking part, assign a role where speaking may be a minimum requirement. In the same vein, try always to assign as masculine a role as possible to the boys. Such roles may include those of the boss, the leader, the captain, the explorer, etc.

k. Use the migrant youngster as much as possible as a resource person, particularly if the information he can provide is based on some of his experience. Example: "John, how are the fruits or vegetables treated to prevent spoiling?"
"Mary, does it snow or rain a great deal in Florida?"

3. To increase motivation: (It will be noted in this area especially that the same basic principles that underline good teaching apply with considerably more emphasis to the education of the migrant youngster.)

a. Aid children in establishing simple goals that are relatively easy to reach rather than a long-term goal that is remote and somewhat abstract. For example: "...from what we have said it looks as though the boys and girls want to list all the machines that are in our homes. Our aim today is to list as many of these machines as possible."

b. Endeavor to establish jointly the need for a particular assignment. Example" "Boys and girls, if we are to grow some plants in class what are some of the things that we will need?"

c. Display and use in discussion sports pictures (especially good for boys) and pictures of new clothing styles (good for girls).

d. Display and use in discussion pictures and news stories of positive behavior of member of minority groups.

e. If possible, induce a parent or grandparent (during slack or rainy seasons) to visit the class and serve as an aide or resource person. Such persons may serve also as sources of entertainment by playing musical instruments or singing native or folk songs.

Note: It is apparent that some of the motivational suggestions also serve as a basis for establishing an educational climate that will improve self-image as well.

4. To increase or improve creativity:

   a. The use of any reasonable guessing game such as an object hidden in a box and explored only with the hand will serve as a good stimulus for imagination. It is suggested that such devices be so set up that the class can see the object while the guessing student has the object obscured from his vision.

   b. In the language arts area, especially for the development of auditory and visual discrimination, the following paradigm is easily adapted:
      "This is what it looks like."
      "What does it sound like?"

      Another model:
      "Cat sounds like fat."
      "What sounds like fun?"

   c. Present three to five simple pictures and, employing several children, make up a story.

   d. In a story-telling session, do not complete the story but instead have one of the youngsters tell how it may end.

   e. Using language, pantomine, and art, have the children respond to the query, "What would you do if...?"

   f. Presenting the appropriate materials such as pieces of cloth, plastic, a piece of lemon, a slice of pickle or a peppermint Life Saver, have the children respond to the following queries:
      "How does it feel?"
      "How does it smell?"
      "How does it taste?"
      "How does it look?"

   g. Have the children respond to such queries as:
      "What do you hear when mother is cooking?"
      "What do you hear when you first wake up?"

5. To promote social growth:

   a. Provide specific opportunity for the migrant child to display the talent, skill or aptitude he may possess. This may range from a simple recitation of a poem to singing or dancing.

   b. Arrange for some child to serve as a "buddy" for the migrant during his early days of attendance.

c. Pair a migrant and a non-migrant child for classroom responsibilities such as board washing, plant watering, etc.

Summary

In an effort to be more eclactic than exhaustive, this author endeavored to present a brief treatment of the multifaceted background of the migrant child with particular emphasis on those positive factors that the teacher could employ effectively by articulating activities with concepts as well as with objectives. Specific suggestions were offered with two purposes in mind. The first was to demonstrate that much can be done by competent teachers despite a lack of special preparation, and the second was to provide a springboard from which such teachers could commence an ongoing search for additional activities appropriate to their particular needs.

M.R.

MAYBE TOMORROW

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